

**CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD (CPRB)
OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

ANNUAL REPORT FY2015 (JULY 2014-JUNE 2015)

**Child Placement Review Board
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OVERVIEW

For the last 35 years, the Child Placement Review Board (CPRB) has made a significant and positive impact on the quality of care offered Delaware's at-risk children. The role of the CPRB combines service and advocacy. The Child Placement Review Board fulfills its role by:

- Advocating to achieve permanency for children in foster care and monitoring the appropriateness of services delivered to those children;
- Reviewing placement and services for Delaware's adjudicated youth in out-of-home, non-detention placements;
- Advocating for improvements in service delivery, permanency planning, caseworker continuity, budgetary support, and overall quality of life for both groups.
- Performing Mixing Review functions as defined in 10 Del. C. § 1009(j)(4) to assure the safety and well-being of children when adjudicated and non-adjudicated youth are placed together.
- Administering the Ivyane Davis Memorial Scholarship to support the higher education and training goals of eligible young adults who have been in or aged out of Delaware's foster care system.
- Administering, in partnership with the Division of Family Services (DFS), administering Delaware's Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program
- Conducting an Appeal Hearing when requested by a youth upon notification that their Achieving Self Sufficiency through Support Transition (ASSIST) funds has been suspended.
- Maintaining partnerships with other agencies concerned with the well-being of children.

Delaware's General Assembly established the CPRB to use citizen-based panels in completing regular reviews of children placed in foster care by the State's Family Court. The role of the CPRB was later expanded to include reviews of Delaware youth assigned by Family Court to out-of-home, non-detention facilities. The CPRB is also conducts reviews for adjudicated youth when they have been placed with non-adjudicated youth to assess the appropriateness of the placement and the safety of the non-adjudicated youth. A 2012-2013 Joint Sunset Committee review confirmed the continuation of the Board's oversight role. The CPRB is required by the General Assembly to submit an annual report to inform both the legislature and the public about the work of the CPRB and the state of Delaware's child welfare system.

The work of the Board continues to have a positive effect on children in foster care, adjudicated youth who receive CPRB reviews, and children who are considered in Mixing Reviews. The Governor appoints trained volunteer CPRB members who have a wide breadth of educational and workplace credentials and extensive experience in child development, social services, and related fields. One major advantage of CPRB reviews is the fact that a mix of citizens makes up each Review Panel. By bringing different backgrounds and offering different perspectives, Review Panel members are able to emphasize positive approaches, advocate specific solutions and recommendations, and focus on the child's well-being and best interests.

The volunteers are organized into twelve panels distributed throughout Delaware's three counties. Each panel is chaired by a Presiding Officer. The Review Panels are supported by CPRB staff, which includes an Executive Director, a Review and Training Supervisor, four Review Coordinators, and two Administrative Support Specialists. An Executive Committee is comprised of a Board Chair, five governor-appointed members and five members elected by the general CPRB membership at their annual meeting.

FOSTER CARE REVIEWS

The New Review Format

During FY2015, the CPRB review formats for foster children were changed to reflect the service delivery modifications initiated by the Division of Family Services (DFS). The CPRB staff met system partners (including representatives from the DFS and Family Court) throughout the state to discuss potential report modifications and to solicit their opinions regarding other changes which would add value to our review process. Adjustments have been made to our review formats in response to the feedback from these meetings.

As a result of a recommendation generated during the Board's Joint Sunset Review, the CPRB review formats for children in foster care now include a two-tier approach:

- **A Case File Review** (previously referred to as a Paper Review) does not require the attendance of the DFS case worker or other interested parties. Modifications to the DFS service delivery model have resulted in shortened the time children remain in foster and the majority children find permanency within two years. When a child is on this trajectory, a Case File Review is scheduled. In this type of review, the CPRB Review Coordinator amasses all relevant information on the child provided by the DFS, placement agencies, Family Court and foster parents. The CPRB Review Panel reviews and evaluates the information to ensure efforts are in the child's best interest and the child's needs are being met in a timely way. When this is the case, a simple report is sent to DFS and Family Court, and Interested Parties
- **A Comprehensive Review** is conducted for children who are not on this trajectory, or if a paper review triggers questions about the best interests of the child. A Comprehensive Review can also be scheduled upon request by Family Court or a placement agency. All parties involved with a case are expected to participate in a comprehensive review to discuss details of the case with the CPRB Review Panel. The Comprehensive Review is a more in-depth review and the design allows for greater discussion on targeted areas as needed. Reports on these in-depth reviews include recommendations for future action and

are submitted to DFS, involved placement agencies, Family Court and the biological parents and other interested parties as appropriate within 15 business days of the review.

Foster Care Reviews

During FY2015, the CPRB conducted a total of 558 reviews of children in foster care. Of those reviews, 88% were comprehensive reviews and 12% were Case File Reviews. Some of these children received more than one review. The number of unduplicated children reviewed was 512. Of those, 51% were African American, 35% were Caucasian, 7% were Hispanic and 7% were classified as Other or Unknown. Gender was evenly matched with 49% female and 51% male. The percentage of children under that age of 12 was 48%, while 51% were 12 years of age or older.

The CPRB conducts the first review after a child has been in foster care 10 months. This provides the Board with the opportunity to submit their recommendations to the DFS and Family Court prior to the child's first judicial Permanency Hearing, conducted when the child has been in care for 12 months. This year the Board conducted 198 first reviews: 21 were Case File Reviews; 177 were Comprehensive Reviews. Permanency has been considered to have been achieved if a child's exit outcome is reunification, guardianship or adoption. Mid-year data¹ collected from these reviews reflect that 74% of the children had a permanency goal of reunification, while 8% had a goal that included adoption or guardianship and 7% had a permanency goal of Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), which far too often results in the youth aging out of foster care. The remaining 11% had goals of TPR or concurrent planning, although in 1% of the cases, the goal was not specified by Family Court or DFS.

The Board conducts second reviews 18th months after a child has been in care. This year the Board conducted a total of 141 second reviews. According to federal regulations reunification efforts should have either been successfully completed or the permanency goal should be changed to another permanency goal. For these children who had been in care for 18 months, the mid-year data reflect that the permanency goal for over 40% these children still included efforts towards reunification. For 28% of the children, their only goal was reunification, while an additional 14% had a concurrent goal which means efforts continued towards reunification and one other goal, usually adoption or APPLA. There are justifiable reasons for continuing reunification efforts past 18 months, such as a parent's unresolved criminal charges. However, the fact that reunification efforts continue well past federally mandated end point for such a high percentage of children in care for this length of time is concerning.

The Board conducts a 3rd review when the child has been in care for 30 months (12 months after the 2nd review) and annually thereafter. A total of 219 reviews were conducted children who have been in care for 30 or more months. Mid-year data reflect that reunification is still being pursued for 10% of the children reviewed (in 5% had a concurrent goal where reunification was one of two goals being pursued). The goal of APPLA was the designated goal for 51% of the children and

¹ The statistics reflected in this section (referred to in the report as "mid-year data") reflects the data from 436 reviews which were conducted between October 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015.

youth with three or more reviews, while efforts were still underway for termination of parental rights (TPR)/adoption or a form of guardianship for 35% of those reviews. The remaining 4% were hybrid concurrent goals.

Reviews of Adjudicated Youth

Reviews are also conducted by the CPRB to assess the placement and status of adjudicated youth who are not in State institutions, such as Ferris. Placement arrangements and supervision for these cases are managed through the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS). Reviews focus upon the appropriateness of the placement, whether the treatment is effectively meeting the youth's needs and the youth's progress in treatment. The youth typically have very serious charges (sometimes with no other criminal history), while others have a lengthy list of minor offenses that ultimately led to the serious offense resulting in residential treatment for longer than six months.

Enhanced community based services have resulted in a decrease in the number of YRS cases the CPRB reviewed. A wider range of services are available to the youth and their families that enable youth to remain safely in their communities while addressing the dysfunction that negatively influences the youth's choices.

Delaware currently does not provide facilities for the comprehensive treatment of serious behavior and sex offenders, however they comprise one third of the YRS youth reviewed. The youth reviewed have been sent to out-of-state facilities that provide the specialized services needed by the youth to achieve a successful rehabilitation and transition back into the community. Future goals include obtaining and analyzing data to determine the effectiveness of these placements in preventing repeat offenses.

The CPRB reviewed 38 YRS cases this year. Only 1 youth reviewed was female. The remaining 37 youth were male. Among the males, ethnic background was as follows: 23 African American, 10 Caucasian, and 4 Hispanic. The one female was African American. The ages of these youth ranged from 12 years and 8 months to 17 years and 4 months. Nine were younger than age 15, while 7 had already turned 17 years of age. All but 4 of the YRS youth were in out-of-state placements. The majority of the youth (23) were in Pennsylvania, 10 were placed in Massachusetts and one was placed in a facility in Georgia.

Mixing Reviews

In addition to the reviews conducted for children in foster care or YRS placement, the CPRB completed four mixing reviews. A Mixing Review is scheduled when an adjudicated youth has resided in the same placement as non-adjudicated youth for a period of two months. The purpose of this review is to assess the appropriateness of the decision to mix adjudicated youth in the same setting as a non-adjudicated youth and ensure the safety of the non-adjudicated youth.

ASSIST Appeal Hearings

Achieving Self Sufficiency through Support Transition (ASSIST) funding provides transitional financial support for youth who have aged out of Delaware's foster care system until the individual turns 21 years of age. The amount of financial support received by a young adult is based on financial need and the recipients sign contracts outlining their responsibilities in order to remain eligible for the program. Essentially, the person must be a law abiding and productive citizen,

attend college, pursue job training and/or maintain employment. The ASSIST funds are suspended if the participant fails to fulfill the responsibilities specified in the contract. The youth has the right to appeal the decision to suspend their ASSIST funds. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DFS, the CPRB has agreed to conduct those appeal hearings. In FY2015, The CPRB conducted ASSIST Appeal Hearings.

Ivyane D.F. Davis Memorial Scholarship and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

Delaware state statute authorizes the CPRB to administer the Ivyane Davis Memorial Scholarship. Named in honor of a founding member of the CPRB, the Davis Scholarship is funded by the Delaware General Assembly and administered by a CPRB Scholarship Committee. The scholarship provides financial assistance for post-secondary education for young people who have been in Delaware's foster care program for one or more years. In FY2014, the General Assembly generously increased the allocation to the Davis Scholarship to \$75,000. This increase has benefited many students, however even with increased funding, students attending four-year colleges or universities will still require student loans.

The CPRB administers the Davis Scholarship in conjunction with federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds through a MOU with DFS. Because of this MOU, the CPRB has agreed to use a portion of the funds from the Davis Scholarship allocation as the 20% state funding match required in order for the state to receive the ETV funding. The addition of the federal funds expands the number of students who are eligible for academic and/or vocational support. In FY2015, the state of Delaware received \$85,733 in ETV funds.

Increasing access to post-secondary education for former foster children is the best method to ensure their success as adults. By combining the Davis Memorial Scholarships and the ETV program, Delaware has streamlined the process for post-secondary education support.

It is possible to receive awards from both the Davis Memorial Scholarships and the ETV program. Davis scholarship funding applies to direct educational expenses (e.g., tuition, books, and campus housing), while ETVs are able to be used to cover indirect costs such as transportation, child care, or off-campus housing.

Both funding sources support post-secondary education for Delaware's former foster children. In FY2015, 53 recipients received scholarships and grants with a value of \$201,820 (this amount includes ETV funds carried over from FY2013 expended before the end of that federal fiscal year). Thirty two students used their grants at four-year colleges, 18 attended two-year colleges and three award recipients attended vocational schools.

THE CPRB: VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

During FY 2015, the 57 members of the CPRB donated 2582 (recalucationg) volunteer hours in their commitment to improve the lives of Delaware's most vulnerable children by serving on their assigned Review Panel or as a member of the Executive Committee, serving on various internal committees, attending conferences, and a variety of other trainings events, activities and pursuits.

Members of the Scholarship Committee are appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board. Supported by CPRB staff, the Scholarship Committee reviews the applications, interviews applicants as appropriate, and makes the awards. In FY2015, 2 Scholarship Committee members volunteered over 100 hours during one week to fulfill their responsibilities. The Scholarship Committee will continue to meet throughout the school year to make determinations as they arise.

Training has been a continuing area of emphasis for all CPRB members, with more attention given to the DFS review format to ensure no area of concern is overlooked. Topic-based training has been created and provided periodically to individual Review Panels. The CPRB Annual Meeting includes a training module that is requisite annual training for every CPRB member. ~~each year~~. A special training workshop is also provided for the Presiding Officers of the Review Panels. New members receive in-depth orientation before they are assigned to a Review Panel, and they receive ongoing mentoring from other Review Panel members.

LOOKING AHEAD

Overall, the mid-year data from reviews conducted for children in Delaware's foster care system reveals serious areas of concern and especially bleak outcomes for children who remain in care more than 10 months. The data reflect that 40% of the reviewed foster children are likely to still be in care 30 months or longer, at which time half of them will have the goal of APPLA. This data also shows that the youth with a goal of APPLA who exited during FY2015 had been in care for an average length of 1812 days (nearly five years). An alarming 35% still age out at reaching majority. The mid-year data further indicates that 50% of the youth 12 years or older who remain in care longer than 30 months were involved in some type of criminal activity. The CPRB is also concerned that those who age out may have a higher incarceration rate than the general public, but there is no way to accurately evaluate this at present. Further study is needed to resolve this serious situation.

The most alarming statistic generated from the mid-year data is that no child 12 years or older exited care to adoption during FY2015. This is a significant dilemma that must be addressed. The strategies used to recruit and identify adoptive resources for children older than 12 are very different from those used to recruit for younger children. The DFS has committed training and resources to educate providers regarding these strategies. That these efforts did not result in even one adoption for an older child is disconcerting.

The legal standard to terminate parent's rights is very complex. Over the past several years, there has been an increase in the use of guardianship to achieve permanency for a child when reunification and/or termination of parental rights are not practical. The CPRB's mid-year data reflects that a guardianship arrangement is most likely achieved for children in care less than 2 years. This year slightly over 60% of the children whose outcome was a form of guardianship has been in care less than two years. This demonstrates diligent efforts on the part of the DFS to locate permanent resources (family, friends) early in the life of the case. However, new initiatives will need to be utilized for guardianship to be a realistic goal for children in care longer than 2 years.

Conclusion Proposed by Neal:

The CPRB continues to advocate for and support favorable child placement outcomes. Complementing the DFS and other state-provided services, the CPRB assist the courts in

determining appropriate resources to provide foster child and adjudicated youth guidance on their pathway to successful adulthood.

New Castle 1

Anne Kauffman* (We will indicate at the bottom of the page that this indicates P.O.)

Eddi Ashby

Marion Gibbs

Mary Morgan

Kathy Welde

Brenda Ewen

Laura Hagood

New Castle 3

Sandra Countley*

Mary Jo Wolfe

Ian Liston

Mary Angerer

Ernestine Jones

Lanette Edwards

New Castle 4

Robert Hamilton*

Caroline Bither

Lou Himmelreich

Pamela Facciolo

Ruth Grulich

Nancy Czeiner

New Castle 5

Candace Charkow*

Deborah Sydnor

Bonita Herring

Susan Edgar

Richard Briden

New Castle 6

Kellie Fresolone*

Mildred Hamilton

Carolyn Karney

Carole Myers

New Castle 9

Barbara Greico Pietropaulo*

Kathy Goldsmith

Deneen Wonnum

Joan Chandler

313
314 **Kent 1**
315 ***Cindy Montejo****
316 Jessie Cathey
317 Jean King
318 Rodney Smith
319 Christella St. Juste
320 Lisa Brewington
321

322 **Kent 3**
323 ***Dana Stonesifer****
324 Deborah Zych
325 Jan Konesey
326 Candace Mebane
327 Mary Austria
328 Gail Allen
329 Wilberta Lewis
330

331 **Kent/Sussex**
332 ***Neal Tash****
333 Judith Mellen
334 Judith Catterton
335 Virginia VanSciver
336 Raymond Moore
337

338 **Sussex 1**
339 ***Sandra Lord****
340 Frances Louise Henry
341 Patricia Lyons
342 Ann Whaley
343

344 **Sussex 3**
345
346 ***Ruth Tull****
347 Michael Norton
348 Cheryl Mitchell
349 Rita Nelson
350 Gary Breakwell
351 Cora Norwood-Selby
352

353 **Presiding Officer*
354

355 **Executive Committee**
356
357 **Carolyn Walker, Chair**
358
359 Martha Brooks
360 Judith Mellen

361 Neal Tash
362 Barbara Blair
363 Cindy Montejo
364 Joseph Dell'Olio
365 Alexis Bryan Dorsey
366 Michael Norton
367 Robert Hamilton
368 Bonita Maull

369
370 **FY15 Resignations**

371 Joan Chandler
372 Nancy Czeiner
373 Lanette Edwards
374 Jean Marie Leonard
375 Richard Briden
376 Elma Jackson (Deceased)
377 Linda Wright
378 Raymond More
379 Gary Breakwell
380 Cora Norwood-Selby
381 Martha Brooks

382
383 **Staff FY15**

384
385 ***Executive Director***
386 Julia Pearce (since December 2014)
387 Shane O'Hare (July–November 2014)

388
389 ***Review Coordinator Supervisor***
390 Amy Wilburn (since January 2015)
391 Linda Lampinen (July–November 2014)

392
393 ***Review Coordinators***

394 Lisa Cookson
395 Jessica Johnston
396 Denise Partridge
397 Vincent White
398 Amy Wilburn

399
400 ***Administrative Assistant II***

401 Kathryn Toole

402
403 ***Administrative Assistant I***

404 Sarah Bowers

405